

Glimpses of Eminent Persons.

JEAN INGELW. "Will you come and call on Jean Ingelw?" said my hostess, one fine day. Of course I would; so away we went along a shady lane, with the old oaks of Holland Park on one side, and the ivy-covered walls of Aubury House on the other; for, though a part of London, Notting Hill is rich in gardens, lawns, and parks, such as one only sees in England. Our way led us by Kensington Palace, the residences of Addison, the Duke of Argyll, Macaulay, and, better than all the rest to me, the house of Thackeray. A low, long brick house, covered with ivy to the chimney-top; a sunny bit of lawn in front, trees and flowers all about; and, though no longer haunted by the genial presence of its former master, this unpretending place is to many eyes more attractive than any place in the land. I looked long and lovingly at it, feeling a strong desire to enter its hospitably open door, and to spend some of the evening spent in listening to the lecture on Swift, long ago in America, and experiencing again the sense of heavy loss which came to me with the tidings that the novelist whom I most loved and admired would never write again. Leaving my tribute of affection and respect in a look, a smile, and a sigh, I gathered a leaf of ivy as a relic, and went on my way.

Coming at last to a quiet street, where all the houses were gay with window-boxes full of flowers, we reached Miss Ingelw's. In the drawing-room we found the mother of the poetess, a truly beautiful old lady, in widow's cap and gown, with the sweetest, serene smile I ever saw. Two daughters sat with her, both older than I had fancied them to be, but both very attractive women. Eliza looked as if she wrote the poetry; Jean the prose—for the former wore curls, had fine eyes, and an indescribable something which suggests genius; the latter was plain, rather stout, hair touched with grey, shy, yet cordial manners, and a clean, straightforward glance, which I liked so much that I forgave her on the spot for writing those dull stories. Gerald Massey was with them, a dapper little man, with a large, fine head, and very un-English manners. Being oppressed with "the mountainous me," he rather bored the company with "my poems, my plans, and my publishers," till Miss Eliza politely devoted herself to him, leaving my friend to chat with the lovely old lady, and myself with Jean. Both being bashful, and both laboring under the delusion that it was proper to allude to each other's works, we tried to exchange a few compliments, blushed, hesitated, laughed, and wisely took refuge in a safer subject. Jean had been abroad; so we pleasantly compared notes, and I enjoyed the sound of her peculiarly musical rhythm, in which I seemed to hear the breezy rhythm of some of her charming songs. The woman was beginning to melt, when Massey disturbed me to ask what was thought of the books in America. As I really had not the remotest idea, I said so; whereat she looked blank, and fell upon Longfellow, who seems to be the only one of our poets whom the English know or care much about. The conversation became general, and soon after it was necessary to leave, lest the safety of the nation should be endangered by overstepping the fixed limits of a morning call.

Later, I learned that Miss Ingelw was extremely conservative, and very indignant when a petition for woman's right to vote was offered for her signature. A rampant radical told me this, and shook her head pathetically over Jean's narrowness; but when I heard that once a week several poor souls dined comfortably in the pleasant home of the poetess, I forgave her conservatism, and regretted that an uncomely aversion to dinner-parties made me decline her invitation.

GEORGE ELIOT.

Having an intense desire to see the author of "Dan Beloe," we drove to the Priory one Sunday, hoping that a peep might be vouchsafed me. To my great disappointment, however, Mrs. Lewes was too feeble to see a stranger; so, while my friend went for a moment, I was forced to content myself with admiring the laburnum visteria that fringed the garden-walls with plumage of violet and gold, and wonder in which of the pleasant-looking rooms the last book had been written, for "Felix Holt" was just finished, and its author preparing to seek rest and health at the German baths. When Mrs. T. returned, she was accompanied by her husband, who, for a moment, I took a woman's look at him under cover of my veil. A small, plain man, with keen blue eyes, marks of suffering in his face, and charmingly courteous manners. As we drove home I asserted my Yankee privilege of asking questions—and, as the facts I then learned are no secret, I repeat them. Mr. Lewes, having forgiven and received back an unfaithful wife, according to English law, obtaining a divorce, although the wife has twice deserted him. Miss Evans is considered his wife, and called Mrs. Lewes by their friends; and, according to the plea of the law, she is his wife, and, as such, she is entitled to the property of the late Mr. Lewes, and many of her warmest friends are among the wise and good. All whom I saw loved, respected, and defended her, according to the plea that, if genius, like charity, covers a multitude of sins in men, why not in women? Others, that outsiders know so little of the sorrowful story that they cannot judge the case; and, though they may condemn the act, they can pity the actors, and heartily admire all that is admirable in the life and labor of either.

MISS COBBE.

As I sat poring over Gustave Dore's illustrations of Dante one morning, the door suddenly flew open, and in rolled an immensely stout lady, with skirts kilted up, a cane in her hand, a fly-away green bonnet on her head, and a loud laugh issuing from her lips, as she cast herself upon a sofa, exclaiming breathlessly: "My dear creature, if ye love me, a glass of sherry!" The wine being ordered, I was called from my book, and introduced to Miss Cobbe. I had imagined the author of "Intuitive Morals" to be a serious, severe lady, of the "Cornelia Blimber" school, and was much surprised to see this merry, witty, Falstaffian personage. For half an hour she entertained us with all manner of loud sayings, as full of sense as of wit, one minute talking earnestly and gravely on the suffrage question, which just then absorbed the circle in which I found myself, the next criticizing an amateur poem in a way that censured her hearers, and in the middle of it jumping up to admire a picture, or trot about the room, enthusiastically applauding some welcome bit of news about "our petition." Chery, sensible, kindly, and keen she seemed; and when she went away, talking hard till out of the gate, and vanishing with a hearty laugh, it was as if a great sunbeam had left the room, so genial and friendly was the impression she made. I saw her several times afterwards, and always found her the same. Whoever she was, she was a social life, and every one seemed to find warmth and pleasure in the attractive circle which surrounded her. It was truly delightful to see a woman so useful, happy, wise, and bold; and it confirmed still more my belief that single women are a valuable and honorable portion of the human race, in spite of the sneers at "old maids" and lamentations over their unhappy lot.

MISS GARRETT.

Another interesting spinster whom it was my good fortune to meet was the female doctor who is conquering prejudices as successfully in London as Dr. Blackwell and Zakrewska are in New York and Boston. Hearing Miss Garrett announced at an evening party, I looked up, expecting to see an elderly person, but was agreeably disappointed when down the long drawing-room advanced a slender, golden-haired young lady, dressed with a taste which few English women possess. She could only stay a few minutes, as a patient was waiting for her; it was curious to hear this girlish little creature in white alk talk of her practice, her office, and the daily work she did. Very simple

and naturally she spoke of these things to her friend, and expressed such hearty sympathy for her work, such confidence in its success, and such satisfaction in her daily increasing power to help and comfort, that, though I never met her again, I shall always remember with real pleasure this little glimpse of woman who bravely took her life into her own hands, and, in spite of ridicule and opposition, dared to shape it as she would, and, so far, made it a beautiful success.

MATILDA BLIND.

Under the blooming apple-boughs at Wimbledon I met the sister of Ferdinand Blind. A handsome, brilliant, Bettine-like girl, full of talent, energy, and enthusiasm. The pet of Mazzini, the friend of Browning, an ardent admirer of Goethe, and a hearty hater of Bismarck. She approved of her brother's deed, considered him a martyr, and gloried in him as a hero, refusing to lament his death as others did, but taking pride in it with a stern sort of satisfaction, such as a Roman girl might have felt at some brave act of friend or lover. To me she was very charming on account of the simple directness of her speech, and the frankness and wisdom of her conversation struck one all the more strongly by the force of contrast, for she talked fluently and well on many subjects not only unknown even to her, but which, in the opinion of herself, she sat in the front of the pulpit, as she discussed Emerson, Carlyle, Kant, Goethe, English politics, and German wars, with a sense and spirit that amazed me, and made me think of her as like pretty dolls beside an earnest woman, with heart and soul all alive to the great questions of the world.

On another occasion I met her in London, and enjoyed a lively argument between herself and three or four young barristers on the subject of poetry. They were sensible fellows, well read in good training for argument, and as enthusiastic as it was possible for Englishmen to be on any purely ideal subject; yet Matilda Blind not only outshone them, but out-argued them, and convinced them that there was something finer in poetry than they had ever suspected before, and unconsciously gave them a sample of a kind which can never be put into words. We were at dinner when she came in, but long after the dessert was over we still sat on, astonished to care for lights, though summer twilight soon hid the faces of the disputants from one another. One by one the young men fell silent, and we sat in the dusk, listening to the girl's eloquent voice, as she repeated lines from Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Coleridge, and Schiller, with a dramatic power that charmed us all. "Please so on," she said, and she did so, illustrating her theme with marvelous skill and beauty, holding us till late into the evening, and causing the whole party to volunteer as an escort when she left.

It was a moonlight night, and I walked with her a part of the way home, answering her questions about America, and hearing some of her pranks, which were decidedly of the Bettine order. She liked the freedom of her own country better than England, and said she was continually shocked at the excellent persons by ruling what she liked, regardless of the strict rules set down for the guidance of young ladies. "I desired to visit Switzerland when more young than now," she said, in her prettily broken English, "and I was to be prevented, but we soon wearied of each other; I sent her home, and then I was greatly content. Ah, such adventures, all alone in a strange country; I had, and so little! I spent my money, I lost my luggage, people did not sell at home, and everything was so dull. Then I had a little fear, and was suddenly very; I sent for money, and redeemed my luggage; I went home and asked pardon for my prank. But it was fine, I liked it well, and I shall go again. My life often becomes heavy to me; but I make freedom for myself, and so endure it. Wait a little, it may yet come to some good; for I have gifts, if I can only learn to use them."

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.

A new biography of Archbishop Whately, edited by his daughter, has appeared in London, from Longman's press. It consists chiefly of the Archbishop's letters, which are carefully arranged in chronological order. A pleasant sketch of his early life shows that he was a very nervous and shy child, naturally more cared for by his sisters than by his brothers. He learned very early to read, and was eagerly watching spiders, tamed ducklings, could distinguish notes of birds, and had so strong a natural turn for arithmetic that at six years of age he astonished a man past sixty by telling him, and rightly too, how many minutes old he was. The calculation was made mentally. For about the three years between the years of five and six, and eight or nine this passion lasted. The child was a calculating prodigy, and, at night, absorbed in multiplication, division, and the rule of three, he ran against people in the streets. But none of the calculation was worked upon paper. The passion died out, and at school vanished so utterly that Whately, he says of himself, "a perfect dunce at ciphering, and so continued ever since." "But," says his daughter, "he always looked upon himself as a duncer in that line, though the readiness with which he solved curious problems and arithmetical puzzles would often surprise and baffle the first-class mathematicians. The clearness of his explanation of the processes of arithmetic was always remarkable; but he was never distinguished as a mathematician at college."

ELOCUTION.

"Being absolutely compelled, by the unwise solicitations of a clerical friend, to give his opinion as to that friend's performance of the service, he told him. Well, then, if you really wish to know what I think of your reading, I should say there are only two parts of the service you read well, and those you read unacceptably. 'And what are those?' said the clergyman. 'They are, 'Here endeth the first lesson,' and 'Here endeth the second lesson.' 'What do you mean, Whately?' 'I mean,' he replied, 'that these parts you read in your own natural voice and manner, which are very good; the rest is all artificial and assumed; it may be added that his friend took the hint, altered his style, and became a very good reader. "He often related another incident, illustrating his strongly expressed opinion that the natural voice is the best adapted to public speaking, and reading, and also less trying to the voice than the artificial tone so generally preferred. A clerical friend of his, who had been accustomed to make use of this artificial tone, complained to him that he was suffering so much from weakness of the throat, he feared he must resign his post. Dr. Whately told him that he believed if he would change his style of reading, and deliver the service in his natural voice, he would find it much less fatiguing. 'Oh,' said his friend, 'that is all very well for you, who have a powerful voice; but mine is so feeble that it would be impossible to make myself heard in a church if I did not speak in an artificial tone.' 'I never,' replied the former; 'you would find that even a weak voice would be better heard, and at the expense of less fatigue, if the tone was a natural one.' The other appeared unconvinced; but meeting his friend some time after, he told him he had at last come round to his view. The weakness in his throat had so increased that he was on the point of retiring from active duty, but resolved, as a desperate final effort, to try the experiment of altering his manner of reading and speaking. He did so, and not only succeeded beyond his hopes in making himself heard, but found his voice so much less fatigued by the effort, that he was able to continue his employment."

EDUCATION.

"Your god-daughter threatens to outgrow her strength; she requires constant care to support her under such a prodigious shoot. She is very forward in understanding, but not alarmingly

so. My plans of education fully answer my expectations; she has never yet learned anything as a task, and that, considering she has learned more than most, will make tasks far lighter when they do come; and she has never yet learned anything by rote, and I trust never will. "The girl's letter should be the picture of the writer; if so, this ought to have been on yellow paper."

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

His Habit of Attending the Theatre. W. O. Stoddard, one of Mr. Lincoln's Secretaries, writes as follows to the New York Tribune:—So much has been said about President Lincoln's theatre-going that a great many people have imbibed the idea that his tastes were dramatic; but this was not so. With the exception of a few of Shakespeare's plays, I do not believe that he ever read but one line of drama, and that was a scene from "The Merchant of Venice" which he read to a party of friends at the residence of a friend of his in New York. He was, of course, a grand impersonator; but it was impossible to get Mr. Lincoln to make many comments upon it. He seemed to have a poor opinion of his own powers as a dramatic critic. Another of his favorite plays was "Othello," and he eagerly embraced the opportunity of seeing it when Davenport and Wallack brought it out in Washington. I was very much struck with the keen interest with which he followed the action, and with the subtle treachery. One would have thought that such a character would have had few points of attraction for a man to whose own nature all his peculiar traits were so utterly foreign. Perhaps he was so fascinated by the very contrast. He did not lose a word of a notion of Mr. Davenport, who played his part exceedingly well, and conversed between the acts with, for him, a very near approach to a criticism. He seemed to be studying what sort of soul a born traitor must have. The strong love of honor made "Falstaff" a great favorite with him, and he expressed a great desire to see Hackett in that character. The correspondence between that gentleman and Mr. Lincoln has been already published, and has interested himself greatly pleased with the representation, and went more than once during Hackett's engagement. I was with him the first night, and expected to see him give himself up to the merriest of merriment. I thought I saw that his mind was very much preoccupied by other things. To my surprise, however, he appeared very gloomy, although intent upon the play, and it was only a few times during the whole performance that he would smile or laugh at all, and then not heartily. He seemed for once to be studying the character and its rendering critically, as if to ascertain the correctness of his own conception as compared with that of the professional artist. He afterwards received a letter from Mr. Hackett, and conversed freely, frankly acknowledging his want of acquaintance with dramatic subjects. Had his earlier education been of sort to develop his perfectly his literary tastes, his keen insight into human nature, and his appreciation of humorous and other eccentricities of character, would have enabled him to have derived the highest degree of enjoyment from the creations of the great masters. As it was, he probably understood Shakespeare, so far as he had read him, far better than many men who set themselves up for critical authorities. 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